

agencies and city planners in the United States are able to make better decisions about health care services, social services, employment programs, transportation, and other critical areas of modern life.

The cities of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay area, for example, owe a great deal of the work to Professor McFadden in terms of his research in helping to shape the design of our Bay Area Rapid Transit commuter train system, which is very crucial to tens of thousands of people for their daily commute to work.

Professor Daniel McFadden joins 16 other Berkeley colleagues as Nobel Prize winners. This impressive roster of intellectuals also demonstrates the commitment of this university to the larger social and economic world. As an alumna of the University of California at Berkeley, I am especially proud of these accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I congratulate Professor McFadden for his Nobel Prize award. I appreciate having this opportunity to express my appreciation for the hard work and commitment of our most recent Nobel Prize winner in economics, Professor Daniel J. McFadden.

#### EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the Congress education agenda, or lack of one.

Two months ago, the Nation's schools opened their doors to the largest number of students in history. Yet, the Nation began the 2000-2001 academic year facing a national education crisis.

Our teachers and students are struggling to teach and learn in underfunded, inadequate, substandard, and crowded conditions. The average American school building is now more than 40 years old, and the estimated price tag to bring our schools into good condition is \$127 billion.

Many of our Nation's communities, like my own, are working to build and modernize schools, but they lack or have very limited funding.

Our President has proposed a school construction tax credit to help communities build and modernize 6,000 schools, and grants and loans for emergency repairs to nearly 5,000 schools a year for 5 years. This school construction relief has bipartisan support in the House of Representatives, and needs to be voted on.

Mr. Speaker, there is also substantial support in the House of Representatives for H.R. 4094, the Rangel-Johnson bill, which would amend the Tax Code to provide incentives for school construction and modernization. It has more than 225 cosponsors. I ask my colleagues to include the provisions of

that bill in the final agreement, as well.

But school modernization and reconstruction is only a beginning. Mr. Speaker, in the district of the Virgin Islands, which I represent, just under 3,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers are in the fifth day of a strike for retroactive wages and better working conditions.

When our teachers strike, our students suffer. We need the Federal government to help us in many areas so we can better address our teachers' very valid concerns and their long overdue salary increases.

We in the Congressional Black Caucus have an important education agenda. We are calling for a public school emergency recovery program, which comprehensively addresses the needs of our poorest and most needy schools. It will cost \$10 billion of the surplus.

The schools in my and other districts need this help. It is more important than a tax break for the richest 1 percent in our country, and it is a much better and more effective way to address the needs of education than our vouchers, which at best is a risky deflection of funding from public schools, where most of our Nation's children are educated.

Mr. Speaker, my daughter Rabiah is a second grade teacher at Barnard School here in the District, a school that would benefit from the CBC's proposed initiative. This week, she and other teachers are being sent home. She had 22 students in her class. Barnard School and many others need more teachers, not less, to meet the needs of their children.

The time has come for us to send a message across the Nation that our children are a priority and that we value and will invest in the education that they receive. We need to pass a budget that reflects investment in school modernization, that addresses the needs of our teachers by creating smaller classes, by increasing opportunities for training, by giving them more support staffing and programs, and by providing incentives to keep good teachers in our classrooms.

I urge our leadership to follow the will of the majority of the Members of this House by bringing to the floor and passing an education budget that fully responds to the real education needs of all segments of our Nation.

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I echo the President's call for continued work to strengthen accountability and raise test scores; to turn around failing schools or shut them down or put them under new management; to expand after school programs and college opportunities for young people; and to ensure a qualified teacher in every class.

Mr. Speaker, as we come to the end of this session of Congress, we will be saying good-bye to several of our colleagues. One of them is a steadfast champion of education as well as labor,

the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY). As he leaves the House after his years of distinguished service, he leaves us in this country an outstanding legacy which includes enacting legislation to strengthen Head Start, elementary and secondary education programs, and college financial aid programs, as well as many other mainstays of American education.

I can think of no more fitting tribute to his service than passing landmark funding for this Nation's public schools and creating the Congressional Black Caucus' public school emergency recovery program.

Mr. Speaker, the outcome of our end-of-the-term negotiations this year must begin with an education budget that ensures a 21st century education for each and every one of our Nation's children, truly leaving not one of them behind.

#### GOVERNMENT MUST DO MORE TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DICKEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, for the past few years, the American people have, through numerous focus groups and polls, sent a strong message to all elected officials. Government must do more to improve education. Government at every level, the local level, the State level, and at the Federal level must do more to improve education.

Now we are finally approaching the closing days of the 106th Congress, the scandal of this session of Congress is that, despite the existence of a \$230 billion Federal surplus, to date, the Republican majority has refused to respond to the clear demand of the American voters.

The Republicans have chosen to move in the opposite direction. Republican inaction is sabotaging the Federal effort to improve our schools. Even long-standing programs, such as ESEA Title I have not been reauthorized by this Republican-controlled Congress. Only destructive proposals are being placed on the negotiations table by the Republicans.

Publicly funded school vouchers and block grants are two of the most dangerous Republican proposals on the table. Both of these radical programs will hasten the demise of the public school systems in our Nation.

We call on President Clinton to rule that block grants and vouchers are nonnegotiable items in the end game negotiations that are now beginning to take place. Title I block grants are nonnegotiable. We refuse to accept a situation where block grants would return the power to the States using Federal money to decide how Title I will be spent.

It is the neglect, the savage neglect over the years of the States that have created conditions in our inner city